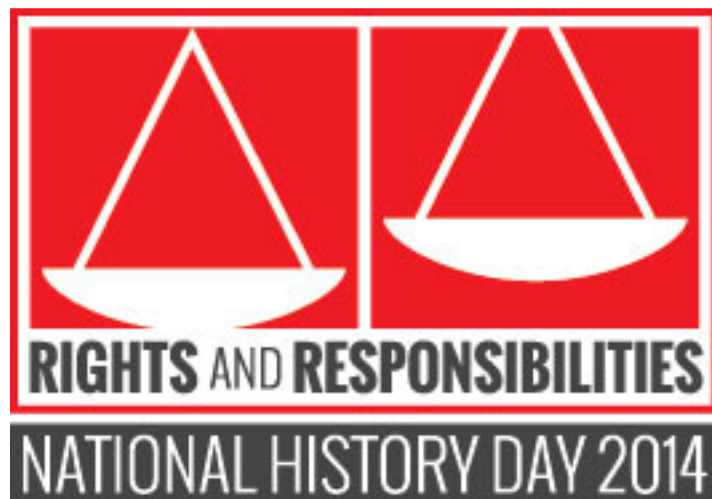


# National History Day

## 2013 – 2014

“Rights & Responsibilities”



Finding and Using Primary Sources:  
Kentucky Historical Society

---

## Contact Information:

Staff Contact: Cheryl Caskey, Student Programs Coordinator

Email: [cheryl.caskey@ky.gov](mailto:cheryl.caskey@ky.gov) Phone: (502) 564-1792 ext. 4461

Address: 100 W. Broadway  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Kentucky Historical Society: <http://history.ky.gov/>

Kentucky Historical Digital Collection: <http://history.ky.gov/research-genealogy/>

NHDKy Information: <http://history.ky.gov/kentucky-history-day-information/>

## What is a Primary Source?

*According to Yale University:* Primary sources provide first-hand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation. They are created by witnesses or recorders who experienced the events or conditions being documented. Often these sources are created at the time when the events or conditions are occurring, but primary sources can also include autobiographies, memoirs, and oral histories recorded later. Primary sources are characterized by their content, regardless of whether they are available in original format, in microfilm/microfiche, in digital format, or in published format.<sup>i</sup>

### *Examples of Primary Sources:*

- Personal letters
- Diary
- Speeches
- Music
- Maps
- Newspapers from the period (microfilm)
- Objects, Artifacts (tools, clothing, equipment)
- Photographs, illustrations, drawings
- Records – birth certificate, death certificate, land/property records, tax payments, military enlistment, transactions, census
- Data obtained through *original* research
- *Some books and pamphlets (Books/pamphlets can be tricky.)*
- Oral history
  - *What is an oral history?* By definition, oral history is the collection and study of historical information using sound recordings of interviews with people having personal knowledge of past events.

These are some questions that can be asked about each primary source to better identify its creator and context:<sup>ii</sup>

- **Type of source:** document image sound recording cartoon poster map artifact video
- **If you circled document, what type:**  
newspaper letter report census record press release advertisement patent diary entry other
- Does the source have a title? If so, what is it?
- Who created this primary source?
- When was it created?
- What was happening during this time period?
- What was the creator's purpose in making this primary source?
- What was this primary source's audience?
- What biases or stereotypes do you see?

<u>Observe:</u> What do you see?	<u>Reflect:</u> What do you think?	<u>Know and Question:</u> What can you learn from the source and what questions do you have? Why is it important?

## Secondary Sources

*According to Ithaca College Library*, a secondary source is something written about a primary source. Secondary sources include comments on, interpretations of, or discussions about the original material. You can think of secondary sources as second-hand information. If I tell you something, I am the primary source. If you tell someone else what I told you, you are the secondary source.<sup>iii</sup>

### *Examples of Secondary Sources*

- Books
- Newspapers
- Articles
- Reviews
- Magazines

As seen, there is overlap on the lists of primary and secondary sources. Identifying sources can be tricky. It is important to remember the context in which the source was made and who made it. If there is any doubt, research or ask for help.

## National History Day

“The purpose of National History Day is to improve the teaching and learning of history in middle and high schools. NHD is a meaningful way for students to study historical issues, ideas, people, and events by engaging in historical research. When studying history through historical research, students and teachers practice critical inquiry: asking question of significance, time and place. Through careful questioning, history students are immersed in a detective story too engaging to stop reading.<sup>iv</sup>”

This guide was designed as a starting place for students and teachers. The Kentucky Historical Society Collections have many primary sources to offer. Listed below are examples students can use to understand how primary sources can be used to identify historical issues.

## Themes and Topics

---

- Various Aspects of American Civil Rights Movement
  - Civil Rights Movement in Kentucky Online Digital Media Database oral history accounts
  - Oral history accounts of segregation in schools
- Progress in coal mine conditions
  - Dreiser Reports, c. 1931
  - Robert D. Bell Papers, c. 1927-1990
  - Ruckman Coal Company scrapbook and legal documents, c. 1919-1950

- Protecting freedom in the midst of war
  - Various speeches of Abraham Lincoln
  - Captain James Sympson diary, c. 1813
  - Understand the sacrifice of a soldier: Diary of Claude Likens, prisoner of war in Japan
- Advocating human progress
  - Muhammad Ali autobiography
  - Minister and educator, John Jay Dickey diary, c. 1882-1933
- Immigration rights
  - Oral history of Edward F. Pritchard Jr.
  - Alexander Family Papers: Woodbarn Farm, c. 1792-1925
- Various aspects of women's equal rights
  - Citizen Manual for Voter's: Emma Cromwell, c. 1920
  - Report of the Annual Convention of Kentucky Equal Rights, c. 1917
  - Oral history of Women's Rights in Kentucky
  - Laura White Collection, c. 1876-1915
- Protecting the rights of others
  - Cassius Clay papers
  - James Garrard memorandum book, c. 1812
  - Scrogin/Haviland collection; 81 letters written during the Civil War portraying various aspects of war and abolition of slavery
- Upholding responsibility to protect constituents rights
  - John Adair papers, c. 1803
  - Isaac Shelby papers, c. 1795
  - Speeches of Henry Clay, c. 1829-1850
- Constitutional Conventions and debates
  - Various Kentucky House of Representative journals concerning state Constitutional Conventions
  - Debate in Convention of Kentucky concerning the exclusion of ministers of the gospel from civil offices
  - Debates in several state conventions on the adoption of the Federal Constitution

---

<sup>i</sup> Primary Sources at Yale. [http://www.yale.edu/collections\\_collaborative/primarysources/primarysources.html](http://www.yale.edu/collections_collaborative/primarysources/primarysources.html).

<sup>ii</sup> Using Primary Sources. Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/>.

<sup>iii</sup> Primary and Secondary Sources. Ithaca College Library. <http://www.ithacalibrary.com/sp/subjects/primary>.

<sup>iv</sup> National History Day. P. 3